City of McAllen

McAllen, TX

Mayor Javier Villalobos

Pledge Summary

The City of McAllen is a city in south Texas with a population of roughly 142,000. It is the largest city in Hidalgo County of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, a region known for its high biodiversity and as an ecotourism destination. Mayor Javier Villalobos of McAllen, Texas has committed to conserving the monarch butterfly and the pollinator community that are so important to ecosystem and economic health. Mayor Villalobos looks forward to engaging residents and creating more pollinator habitat in the city.

Action Items Committed for 2025

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2026	12/2/2025	
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2025	12/10/2024	Leadership Circle
Major Javier Villalobos	2024	1/11/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2023	3/30/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2022	4/19/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Jim Darling	2021	3/19/2021	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

10000

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

5000

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

4.5

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

Shared public spaces and common areas or parks.

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

91% of City of McAllen residents are people of color and 46% are considered to be in poverty. Engaging with our community at large through educational programming and habitat creation projects ensures that we are connecting and impacting the lives of folks in marginalized communities.

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What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

We continue to want to encourage the people of McAllen to support ecosystem health for the benefit of people and wildlife.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

NWF website, from plant finder to this portal, have been useful.

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

Our Monarch butterfly conservation efforts extend out into multiple programs across the City of McAllen, including direct habitat creation projects via wildflower meadows, Tiny Forests, urban forests, tree plantings, and garden plantings at city parks. In terms of programming and outreach, we weave conservation messages into much of our ongoing programs and events and emphasize actions that our community can take to improve the environment for wildlife, including birds, butterflies (including specifically monarchs), and other pollinators.

Selected Action Items

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

PXL_20250404_171627107.jpg

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

PXL_20250404_171739289.jpg

Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)

1300 W Houston Ave, McAllen, TX 78501

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

National Wildlife Federation and the City of McAllen

What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.07

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Socialife Full Page Ad.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2025 (bug parade led by Mayor Villalobos).jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2025 (plant giveaway).jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2025 (entry walk).jpg

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2025 (garden tour).jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2025 (learning station in action).jpg

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

1500

What was the date of your festival?

4/26/2025

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

American Forests, Native Plant Project, Texas Master Naturalists, RGV Pollinator Project, South Texas College Biology Club, Native Plant Society of Texas Rio Grande Valley Chapter, Heep's Plant Nursery, La Floresta Honey Plant Nursery.

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

This was our 9th annual Monarch Festival in McAllen. Thanks to H-E-B, the festival was free to the community with the contribution of a plastic bottle or plastic bag to recycle. Including both attendees and vendors, we had a total of 1,500 people that participated in the festival, getting to learn about Monarch butterflies, native plants, and conservation actions we can take and support here in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The Festival was held at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen, Texas, on 4/26/2025, from 9am - 2pm. Notable success included giving away 2,335 native pollinator-friendly plants, courtesy of the National Wildlife Federation, to the festival attendees to plant at their garden spaces. We were able to include information about how to care for the plant and encouraged guests to create a NWF Certified Wildlife Habitat. We also had numerous environmental educators sharing information about monarchs, pollinators, and native plants with interactive activities and hands-on learning opportunities.

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

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Date of Proclamation:

4/14/2025

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

Mayors Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Proclamation on 2025-04-14.jpg

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2025 Mayors Monarch Pledge Proclamation.docx

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Easy Monarch Gardening Design – Center for Urban Ecology.pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

2025 Programming.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Socialife Full Page Ad.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

Quinta Mazatlan continues to share monarch and pollinator-friendly gardening information with our community via in-person programming, printed media (brochures, flyers, newspaper), and through digital media (social media, blog posts, video). Programs include native plant gardening workshops, walk with a naturalist tours, school field trips, mini-festival events, and other seasonal activities. We've specifically offered multiple rounds of our popular "Plant Propagation" and "Garden Design" workshops this year. Please view Quinta Mazatlan's website and social media for examples of our programs and events. We also have given away native plants and native wildflower seed packets over the course of the year, with over 750 alone given away during our Planta Nativa Month in October. We also focus on providing informational resources to the community. We wrote an "Easy Monarch Gardening Design" post that includes plant recommendations and arrangements. We also provide lots of downloadable information on our website about native plants good for wildlife (https://quintamazatlan.com/cue-ecology/native-plant-resources). In person visitors to the park have the opportunity to pick up a free trifold that lists many plants that are beneficial to monarchs and other pollinators.

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

Native Plant Project Native Plant Society of Texas (Rio Grande Valley Chapter) Texas Master Naturalists (South Texas Border Chapter and Rio Grande Valley Chapter) RGV Pollinator Project (Rio Grande Valley Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists) Texas A&M Forest Service American Forests UT Rio Grande Valley

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

Native Plant Project: Provided environmental education at events and supplied Quinta Mazatlan with native milkweed seeds for plant propagation. Native Plant Society of Texas (RGV Chapter): Provided educational outreach at the Monarch Festival Texas Master Naturalists: Volunteered and did educational outreach at Monarch Festival American Forests: Provided educational outreach Texas A&M Forest Service: Provided educational outreach. UT Rio Grande Valley: Provide insights into their native plant research, gave away seeds and plants.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Plant Giveaway at Monarch Fest!.png

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2025 (41).jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2025 (90).jpg

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

2937

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

1620

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

We gave away plants at our annual Monarch Fest (spring) and Planta Nativa Month (fall). The Climate-Smart Habitat Restoration (NWF): They were the source of the majority of the giveaway plants, which included Asclepias oenotheroides, Chromolaena odorata, Ratibida columnifera, Salvia coccinea, and Tamaulipa azurea. We also hosted two local native plant vendors at the event: Heep's Plant Nursery and La Floresta Honey Plant Nursery. Both of which sold additional plant species.

Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

City Nature Challenge 2025.png

How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).

230

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Quinta Mazatlan, Texas Parks & Wildlife

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Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.

Continued as the local co-organizer of the City Nature Challenge, which is a bioblitz-style community science event encouraging people to find and document as many species of plants, animals, and fungi as they can over a four-day period. Since 2018, people in the RGV have uploaded almost 40,000 research grade observations of over 2,500 species in the area. We also continue to curate iNaturalist observations of Monarch butterflies in the Rio Grande Valley by adding life-stage annotations and nectar plant and host plant observation fields, helping to continue to monitoring the seasonality of monarchs along with their host and nectar plants.

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Mayor planting.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

millkweed planting.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

planted zizotes.jpg

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

This was the best fit for our milkweed planting efforts. We planted milkweeds in association with two Tiny Forests installed in 2025. At McAllen Public Library, we planted Zizotes Milkweed (Asclepias oenotheroides) along the sidewalk edge of the project area, which is proximate to Orchid Avenue and the library's parking lot. At Firemen's Park, we planted Zizotes Milkweed (Asclepias oenotheroides) along the installed decomposed granite trail. This is in proximity to 1st Street. At both sites, we also include many wildflower plugs, nectar plant shrubs, and nectar plant trees.

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

1784

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size

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of a football field.

0.5

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Maintenance needs to assist with overall ecological succession into Tamaulipan Thornscrub / Thornforest. They are not long-term maintained as wildflower meadows or prairie patches. However, even as they transition out of early successional stages, they continue to be valuable for monarch butterflies and pollinators at large.

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

millkweed planting.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

planted zizotes.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

ready to plant zizotes.jpg

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

H-E-B, McAllen Public Library, McAllen Parks and Recreation

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

2613

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

We planted a Tiny Forest at the McAllen Public Library, which included seedlings of perennial nectar-producing trees and shrubs (e.g. Citharexylum berlandieri, Chromolaena odorata, Tamaulipa azurea, Havardia pallens, etc.), as well as planting plugs of wildflowers and scattering seeds to provide quick blooms available for monarchs and other pollinators while the perennial woody plants take root. We added 20 Zizotes Milkweed (Asclepias oenotheroides) along the main sidewalk on 5/2/2025. See this blog for more details on the McAllen Public Library project: https://cuefornature.wordpress.com/2025/03/21/from-gray-

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to-green-the-mcallen-public-library-tiny-forest-project/ We planted a second Tiny Forest at Firemen's Park, which included a variety of valuable nectar plants and host plants for Monarchs and other butterflies, including: Aloysia gratissima, Asclepias oenotheroides, Conoclinium betonicifolium, Lantana urticoides, and many others. See this blog for more details on the Firemen's Park Project: https://cuefornature.wordpress.com/2025/10/25/new-tiny-forest-next-to-town-lake-in-mcallen-texas/

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

20250402_140930.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

20250402_141043.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Zizote milkweed (1).jpg

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

5

What species were collected or propagated?

Zizotes Milkweed (Asclepias oenotheroides), Slim Milkweed (Asclepias linearis), Pearl Milkvine (Matelea reticulata)

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Quinta Mazatlan

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

Part of ongoing effort to propagate milkweeds for use in planting projects at city properties. We maintain milkweeds at Quinta Mazatlan in restored meadows, collect seeds, and propagate them to plant at projects like Tiny Forests, as well as continue to add them to

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suitable locations at Quinta Mazatlan. This is an ongoing project, and so it is not limited to one particular event.

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